

Please call my toll free number (866)371-8747 for assistance related to the earthquake in Haiti.

Haitian Adoptions

Recently, Rep. Herseth Sandlin signed two bipartisan letters to Secretary of State Clinton, Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano and USAID Administrator Shah urging that these highly vulnerable children be a high priority for U.S. disaster relief efforts. The tragedy afflicting Haiti is heartbreaking, and the children's suffering is something we all want to end.

To see the letter to Secretary Clinton, click [here](#).

To see the letter sent to Secretary Clinton, Secretary Napolitano and USAID Administrator Designate Shah, click [here](#).

Secretary Napolitano is allowing Humanitarian Parole for orphaned Haitian children. Granting this status to orphaned children will speed up the adoption process during this difficult time and allow them to be united with their new families in the U.S.

Families in the process of adopting Haitian children should send the documentation they have to haitianadoptions@dhs.gov or contact Rep. Herseth Sandlin's office at the toll free number (866)371-8747

for assistance. The Department of Homeland Security is working to gather as much information as possible about pending adoption cases to speed up the adoption process and make sure relief is reaching these children.

Charitable Deductions

A new tax relief law allows people who contributed in 2010 to charities providing earthquake relief in Haiti to take a tax deduction for the contribution on their 2009 tax return instead of their 2010 return. This means you can receive an immediate tax benefit, rather than having to wait

until you file next year's return. Certain requirements apply:

- Only cash contributions made to these charities after Jan. 11, 2010, and before March 1, 2010, are eligible. This includes contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card.
- The contributions must be made specifically for the relief of victims in areas affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.
- You may deduct these contributions on either your 2009 or 2010 returns, but not both.

In addition, the general rules about tax deductions for charitable donations apply:

- You must itemize your deductions on [Schedule A](#) ; those claiming the standard deduction, including all short-form filers, are not eligible.
- You must keep a record of any deductible donations you make.
For donations by text message, a telephone bill will meet the requirement if it shows the name of the donee organization and the date and amount of the contribution.
- For cash contributions made by other means, be sure to keep a bank record, such as a cancelled check, or a receipt from the charity showing the name of the charity and the date and amount of the contribution.
- Contributions to foreign organizations generally are not deductible.

Make sure your contribution goes to a qualified charity. Most organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible donations are listed in a searchable, online database available under [Search for Charities](#).

Some organizations, such as churches or governments, may be qualified even though they're not listed on IRS.gov.

Related Item: [Publication 526](#) , Charitable Contributions

Looking For Relatives

Families of Americans living in Haiti who are trying to find the status of their loved ones are encouraged to contact the State Department at 1-888-407-4747. This line is experiencing a high volume of calls at this time, so some callers may receive a recording. To better handle these requests, the State Department has established an e-mail address as well:

Haiti-Earthquake@state.gov.

A top priority of the State Department is accounting for the thousands of American citizens who are currently in Haiti. US citizens in Haiti have been urged to contact the Embassy via email at ACSPaP@state.gov to request assistance or call the Embassy's Consular Task Force at 509-2229-8942, 509-2229-8089, 509-2229-8322, or 509-2229-8672.

The Red Cross has also set up a Family Links website managed by the ICRC, in cooperation with the tracing services of the Haitian Red Cross Society and of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies throughout the world, to assist in the process of restoring contact between separated family members:

- [Family Links website for Haiti»](#)
- [Cette page en français»](#)

More Resources

- [White House»](#)
- [State Department»](#)
- [USAID»](#)

Assistance for Haiti Relief Efforts

The State Department has established a dedicated web page that offers advice for anyone wishing to provide assistance to those affected by the earthquake:

- [State Department Haiti Earthquake website»](#)

The Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) provides information and guidance in support of appropriate international disaster relief:

- [Center for International Disaster Information \(CIDI\) website»](#)

Haitian Earthquake Relief Fraud Alert

The FBI has issued a fraud alert, reminding Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of Tuesday's earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization and/or a good cause. Therefore, before making a donation of any kind, consumers should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

- Do not respond to any unsolicited (spam) incoming e-mails, including clicking links contained within those messages.
- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.
- Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a purported link to the site.
- Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.
- Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions: Providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

Anyone who has received an e-mail referencing the above information or anyone who may have been a victim of this or a similar incident should notify the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov